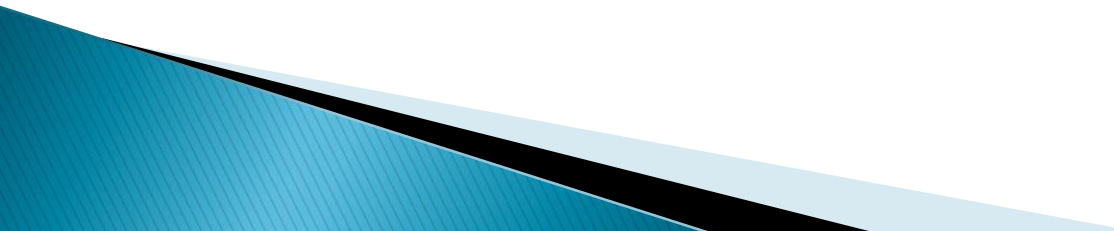


**EXECUTIVE ADVANCE,
2016/2017 ACADEMIC SESSION**

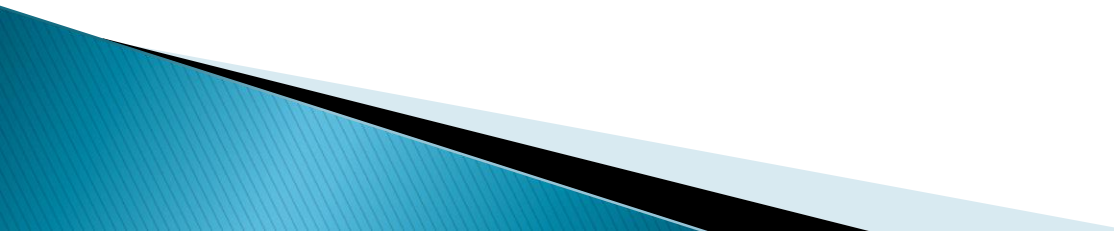
BASIC LESSONS IN WRITING

By

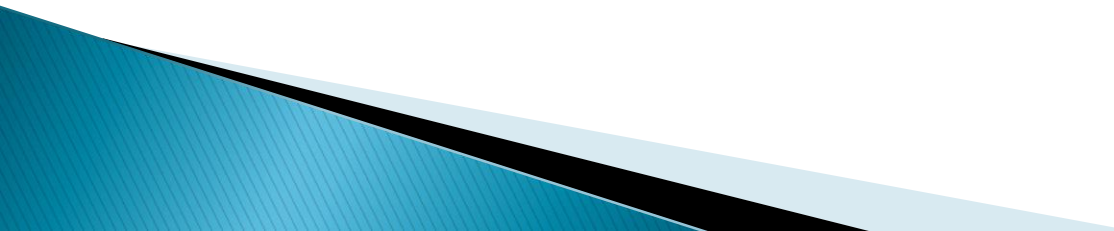
Professor Christopher Awonuga
Department of Languages and
General Studies, Covenant
University

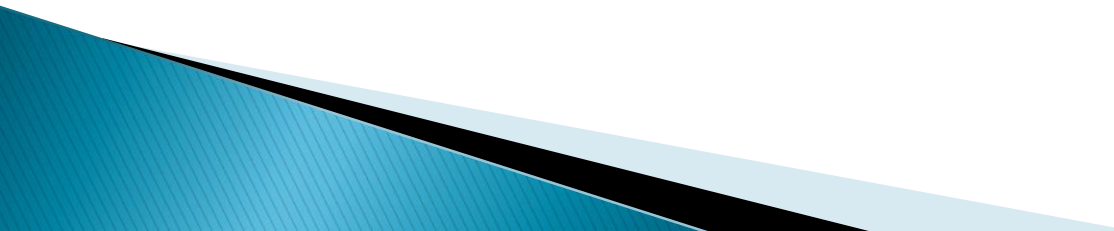


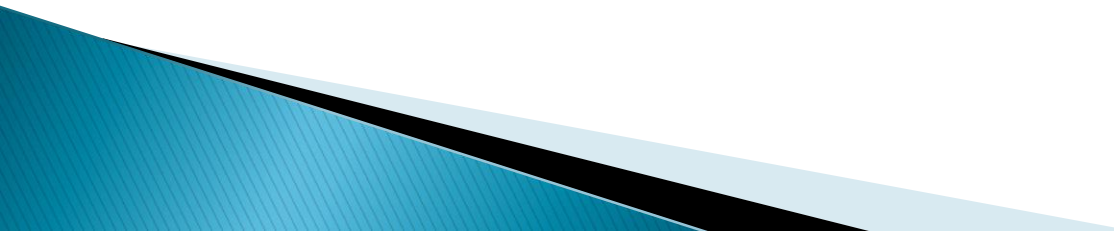
- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Generally two forms of human communication: speaking and writing.

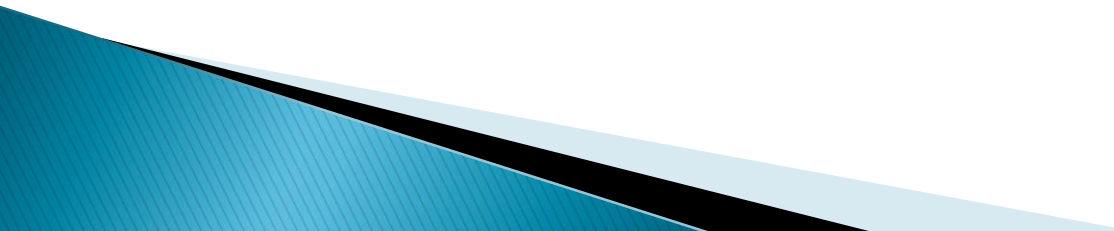
- ▶ Five main areas for effective writing:
 - ▶ syntax
 - ▶ grammar and vocabulary
punctuation
 - ▶ development of paragraphs
 - ▶ style and appropriateness
- 

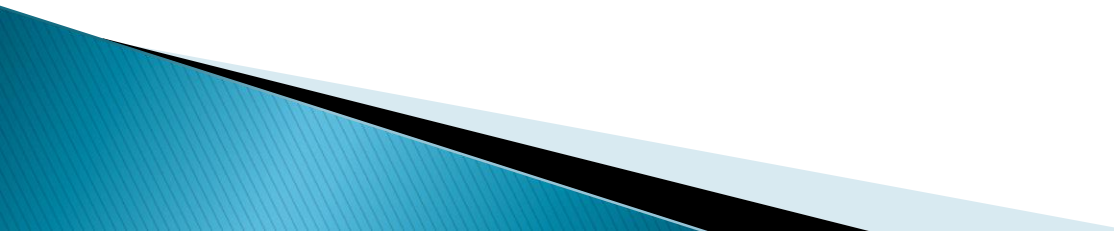
- ▶ Syntax
- ▶ The linear order of words to form sentences

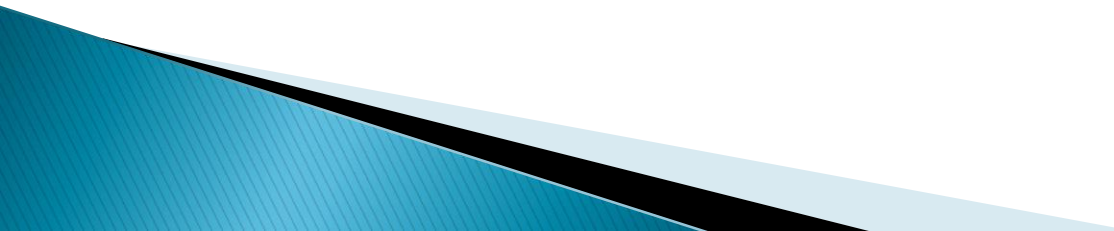
- ▶ Types of sentence in English:
 - ▶ declarative
 - ▶ interrogative
 - ▶ imperative
 - ▶ exclamatory
- 

- ▶ Declarative: used to make statements,e.g.,
 - ▶ Basic structure: subject (noun or pronoun)+verb+object (noun or pronoun)+adverb
 - ▶ My name is John.
 - ▶ I went to Lagos yesterday.
 - ▶ I shall/will see you tomrrow.
- 

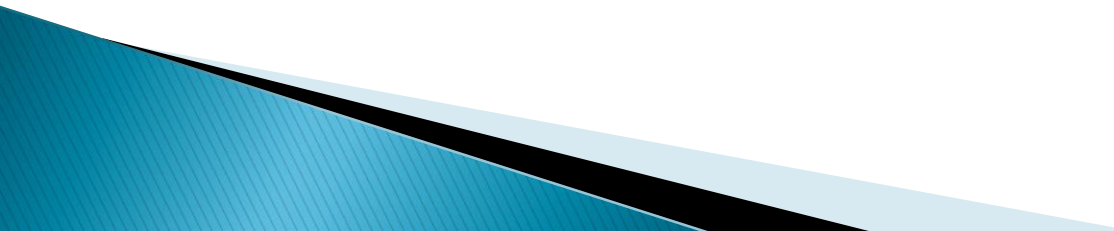
- ▶ Interrogative: used to ask questions, e.g.,
 - ▶ What is your name?
 - ▶ Were you at the meeting?
 - ▶ Where are you coming from?
- 

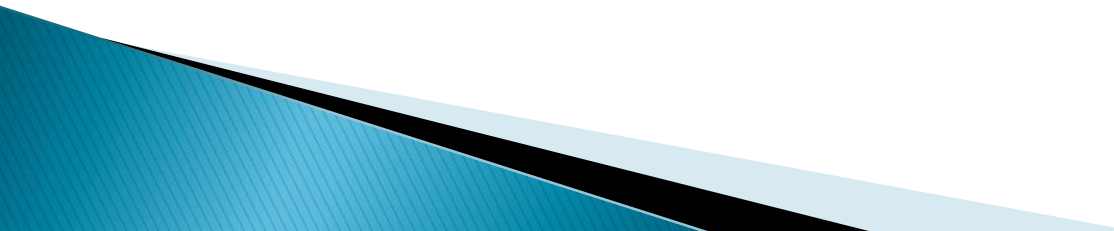
- ▶ Imperative: used to give commands, e.g.,
 - ▶ Sit down./You sit down.
 - ▶ Open the window.
 - ▶ Mind your own business.
 - ▶ Compare requests:
 - ▶ Please, pass the salt.
 - ▶ Could you open the window?
- 

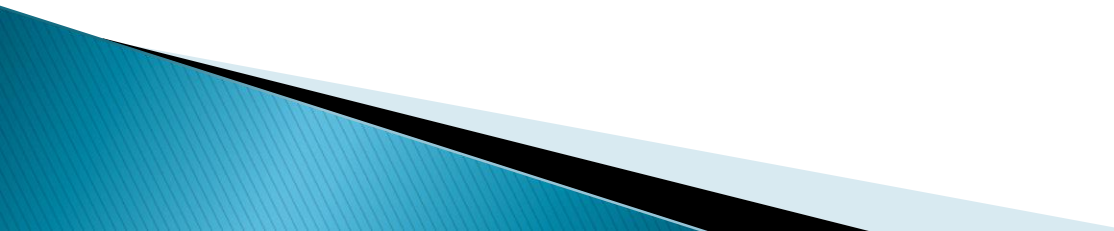
- ▶ Exclamatory: used to express emotion,
e.g.,
 - ▶ What a foolish man!
 - ▶ How nice!
 - ▶ Notes: 1. Use of exclamatory mark [!]
 - ▶ 2. Only one exclamatory mark at a time.
- 

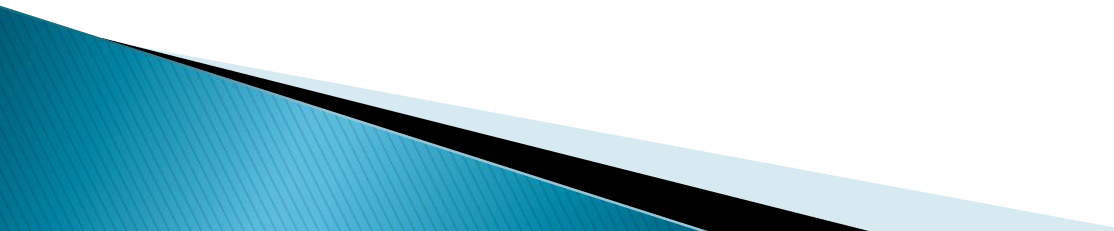
- ▶ An example:
 - ▶ “,,,O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!” (2 Samuel 18:33, KJV).
- 

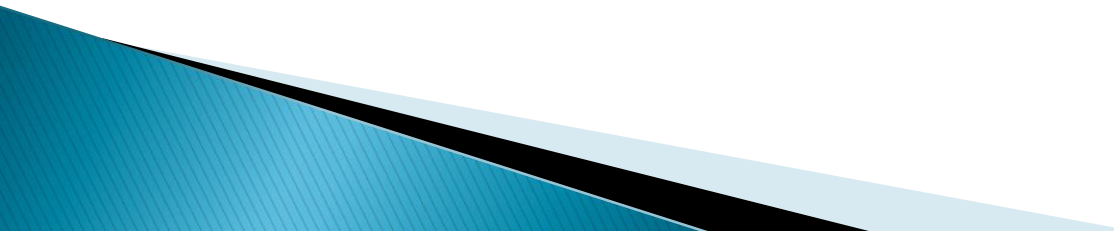
- ▶ English is a rule-governed language. In order to form acceptable sentences in English, you must abide by the rules guiding the formation of acceptable sentences in the language.

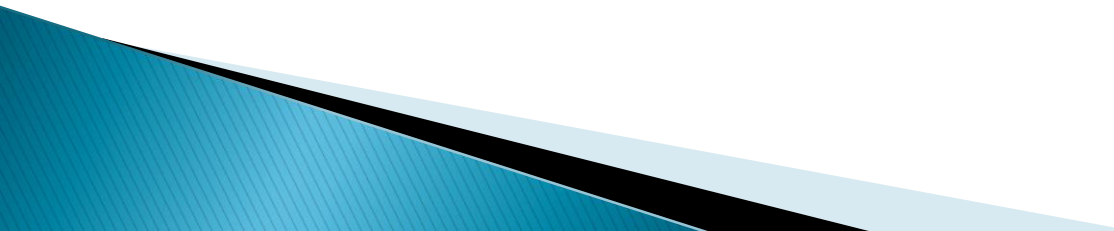
- ▶ Concord and agreement in sentences
 - ▶ Agreement between subject and verb:
 - ▶ I/You/They *go* to school every day.
 - ▶ Olu/He/She *goes* to school every day.
- 

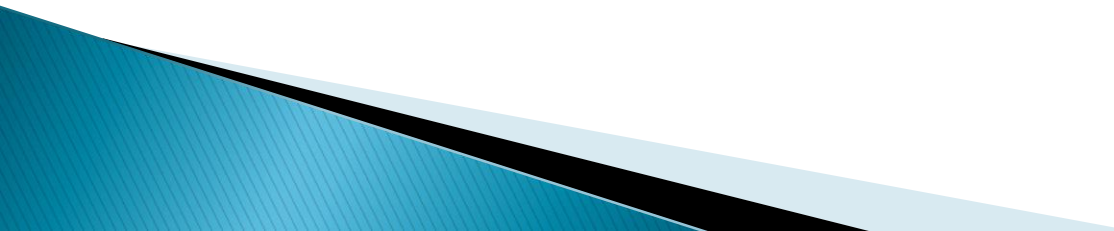
- ▶ Agreement between verb and adverb:
 - ▶ I *saw* John *yesterday*.
 - ▶ Compare: *I see John yesterday.
- 

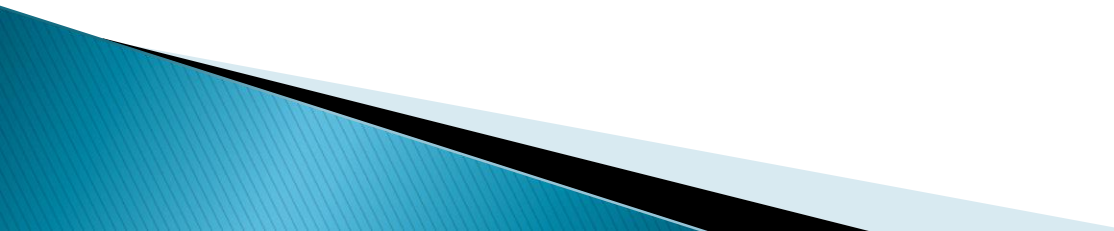
- ▶ Rules governing coordination:
 - ▶ 1. When two or more singular subjects are connected, it is the plural form of the verb that is used, e.g.,
 - ▶ a) A fool and his money *are* soon parted.
 - ▶ b) Both Jane and Peter *love* adire cloth.
- 

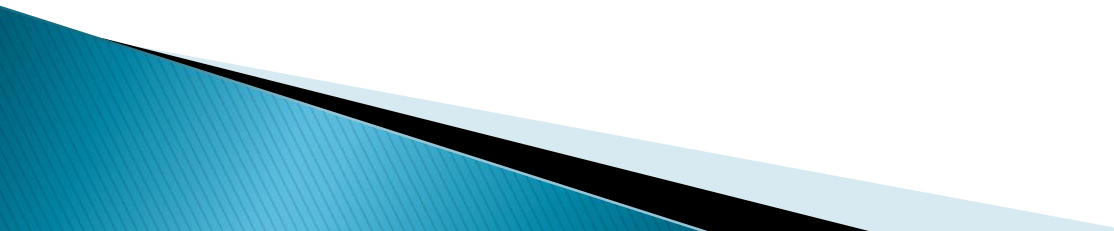
- ▶ 2. But when each of the singular subjects is taken individually, it is the singular form of the verb that is used, e.g.,
 - ▶ Every man and woman *makes* a separate report.
- 

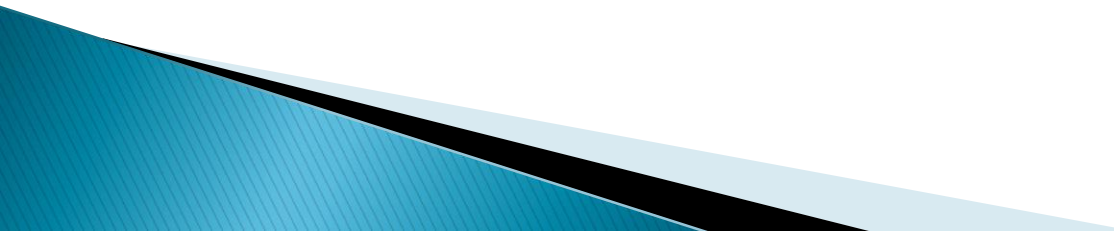
- ▶ 3. When two singular subjects refer to the same person or thing, the singular form of the verb is used, e.g.,
 - ▶ a) My uncle and manager *has* travelled abroad.
 - ▶ Compare: My uncle and the manager *have* travelled abroad.
- 

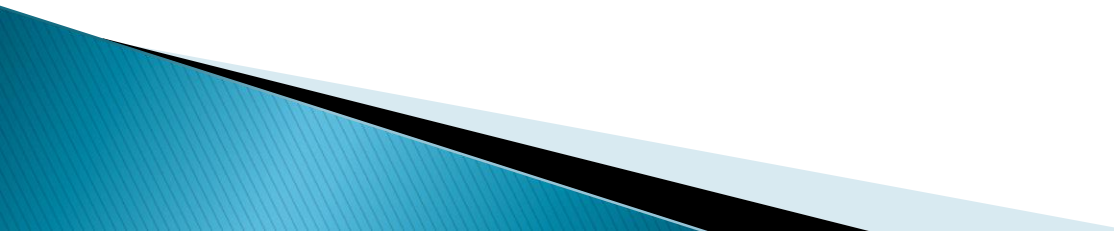
- ▶ b) Bread and butter is good enough for me.
 - ▶ 4. When a singular subject is followed immediately by *with, as well as, in addition to, no less than, together with* or a similar construction, it is the singular form of the verb that is used, e.g.,
- 

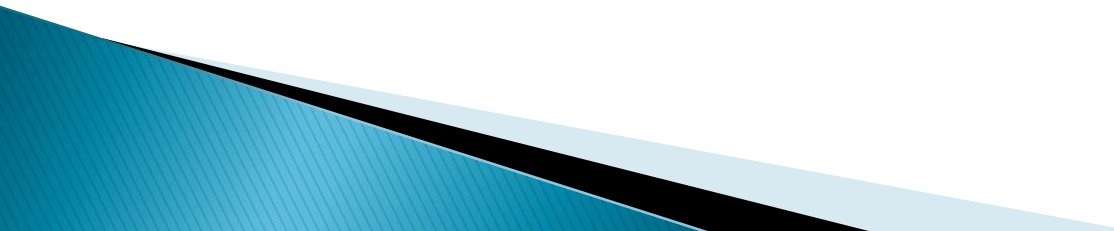
- ▶ a) The boy *as well as* his father *needs* advice.
 - ▶ b) The man *together with* all his children *is* here.
 - ▶ c) The house *in addition to* the car *was* sold.
- 

- ▶ 5. When a singular subject is followed by a plural modifier, it takes a singular verb, e.g.,
 - ▶ a) The attitude of these workers *is* commendable.
 - ▶ b) One of the boys in the class *has* emerged the winner.
- 

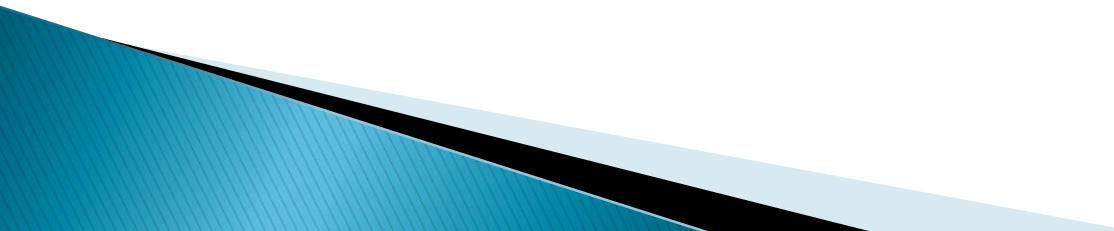
- ▶ Some other varieties of sentences
 - ▶ Simple sentence
 - ▶ Compound sentence
 - ▶ Complex sentence
 - ▶ Compound-complex sentence
- 

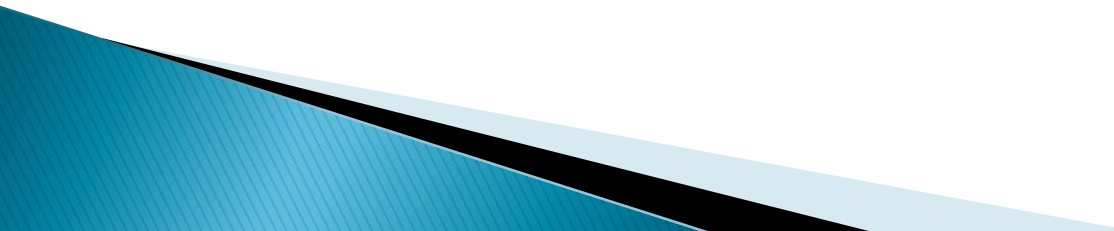
- ▶ Simple sentence, contains only one verb and tends to be short, e.g.,
 - ▶ a) Jack loves Jill.
 - ▶ b) The prices of goods have gone up astronomically.
- 

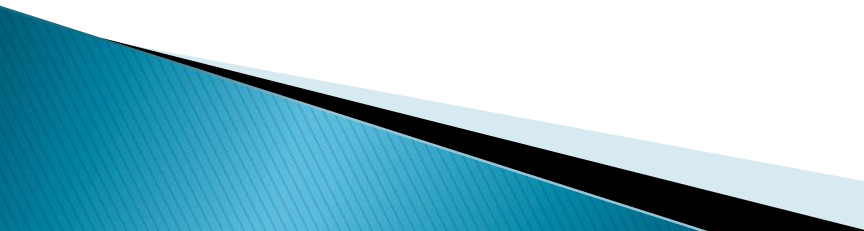
- ▶ Compound sentence: made up of two or more main or independent clauses, e.g.,
 - ▶ a) Blessing got back home late and (she) went straight to bed.
 - ▶ b) The police surprised the thieves, (and) killed two of them and arrested the others.
- 

- ▶ Complex sentence: made up of a main clause and a subordinate clause, e.g.,
 - ▶ a) Ben could not go out because it rained heavily.
 - ▶ b) Because it rained heavily, Ben could not go out.
- 

- ▶ Compound-complex sentence: made up of one or more compound sentence and one or more complex sentence, e.g.,
- ▶ Blessing got back home late and (she) went straight to bed, as/for/because she was too tired to cook.

- ▶ Grammar and Vocabulary
 - ▶ Appropriate Use of Words
 - ▶ 1. Words must be chosen carefully:
 - ▶ a) Avoid using words whose meanings you are not sure of.
 - ▶ b) Avoid verbosity, e.g., *ATM machine*, *7am in the morning*, *a worthy and honourable man*, etc.
- 

- ▶ c) Beware of confusable words, e.g.,
access/assess, cease/seize,
border/boarder/bother, loose/lose,
quiet/quite, order/other, several/severally,
etc.
 - ▶ d) Get the spellings of the words you use right.
- 

- ▶ Distinction between British English and American English
 - ▶ British English American English
 - ▶ honour honor
 - ▶ favour favor
 - ▶ counselling counseling
 - ▶ worshipper worshiper
- 

▶ metre

meter

▶ theatre

theater

▶ learnt

learned

▶ spelt

spelled

▶ got

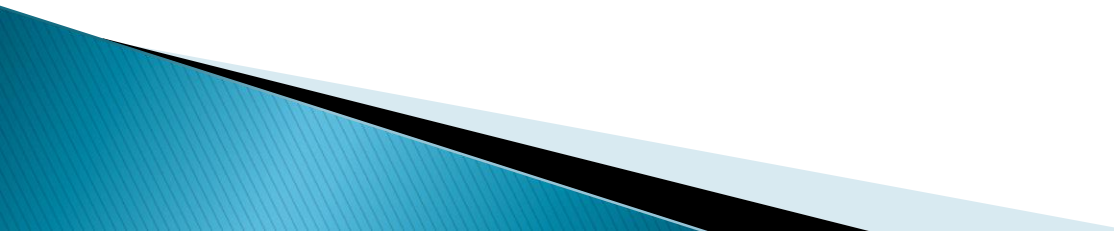
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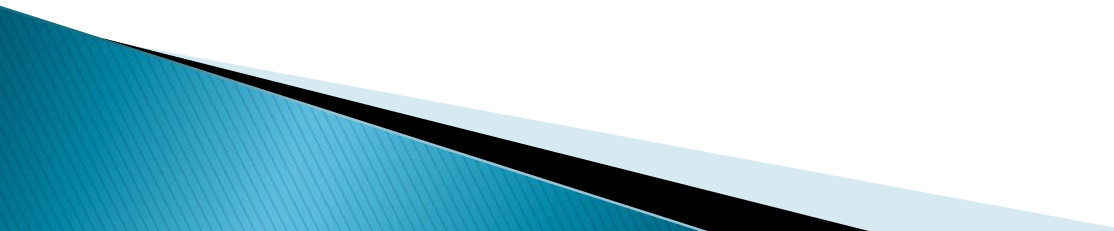
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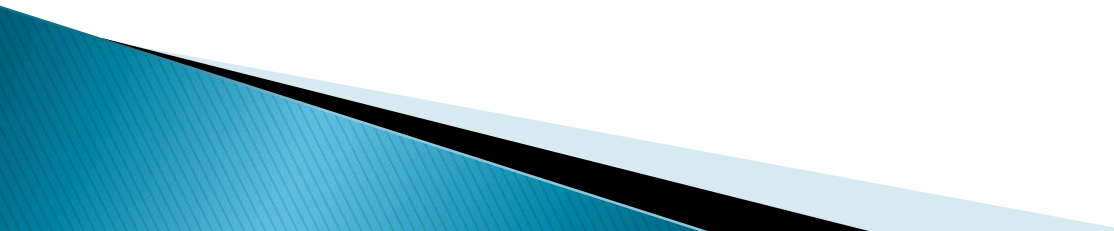
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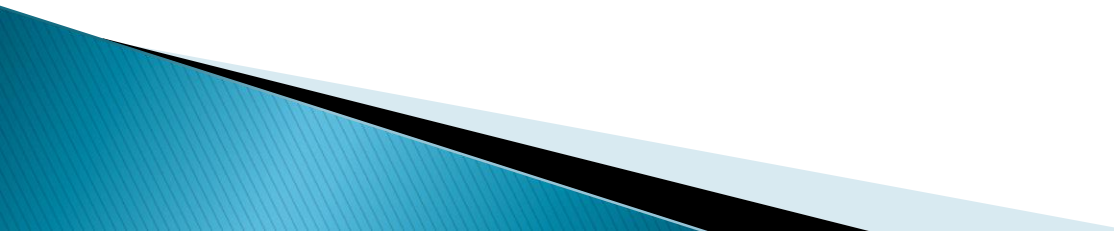
practice/practise

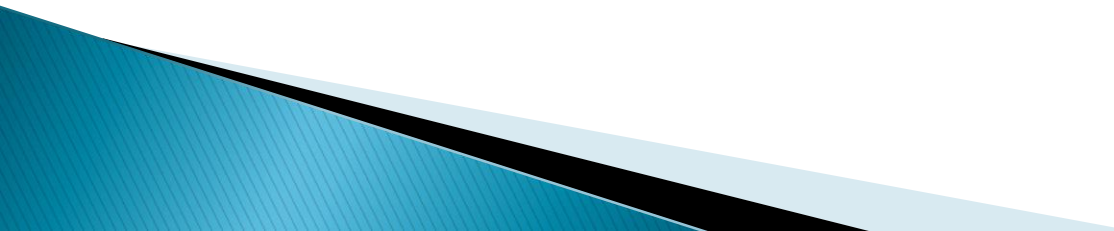
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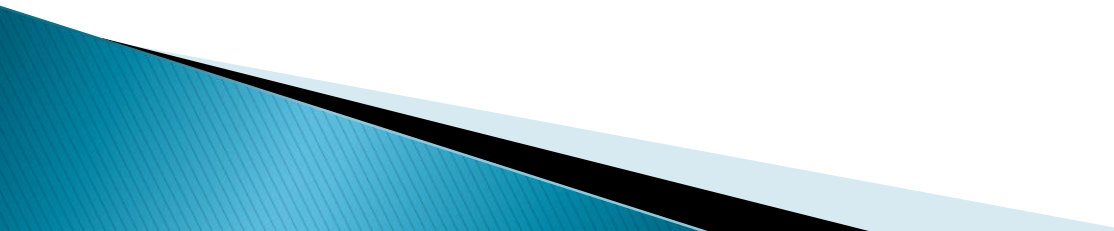
- ▶ 2. Appropriate Use of Past Tense Forms:
e.g., *begin/began/begun*, *ring/rang/rung*,
ring/ringed/ringed, *stationary/stationery*,
etc.
 - ▶ 3. Appropriate Use of Prepositions, e.g.,
operate on, *consist of*. Compare: *operate*,
order.
- 

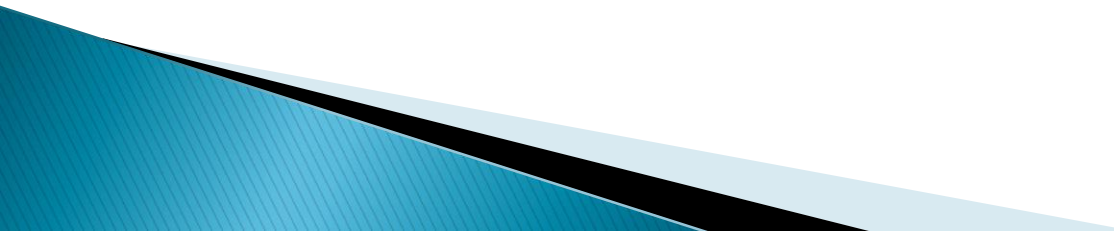
- ▶ Punctuation (After Jordan (1980:79-81 and Department of English, OAU, 1988:171-176)
 - ▶ Punctuation marks: the comma, semi-colon, colon, hyphen, apostrophe, question mark, brackets, quotation marks, exclamation mark, dash and full stop.
- 

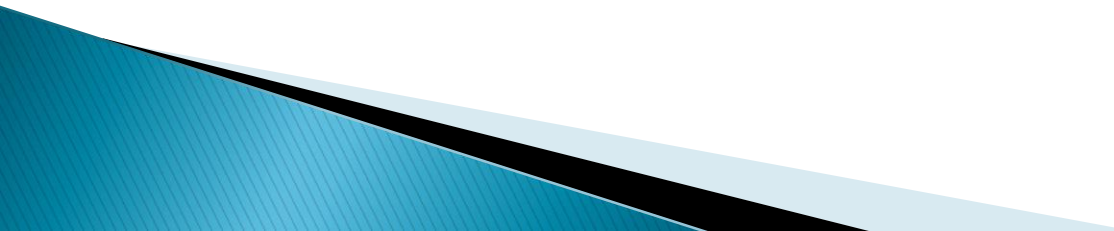
- ▶ The comma [,]
 - ▶ Used to:
 - ▶ 1. separate items in a list, but not generally required before the final *and*, e.g.,
 - ▶ I bought a book, two notebooks, a ruler and a file.
 - ▶ 2. mark off an interruption in the normal structure of a sentence, e.g.,
- 

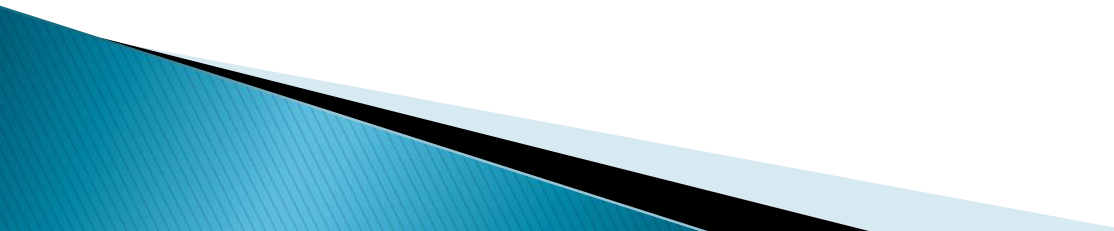
- ▶ a) She is planning, so I learnt, to emigrate to the United States of America. (clause)
 - ▶ b) Mr Okon, the Chairman of the company, denied the accusation. (phrase)
 - ▶ c) The disturbance, however, continued unabated. (word)
- 

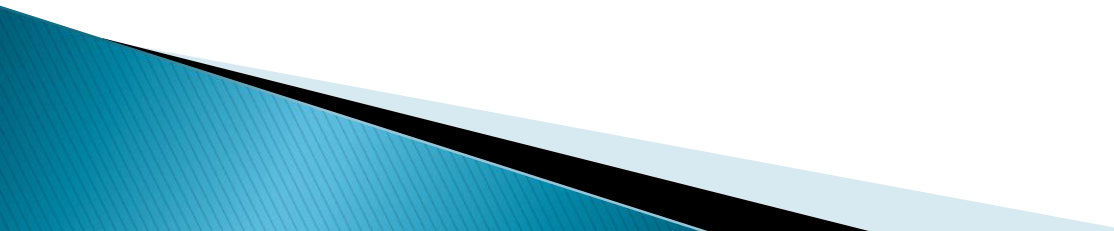
- ▶ 3. distinguish between defining and non-defining relative clauses, e.g.,
 - ▶ a) His father who lives in Ibadan will help him. (defining)
 - ▶ b) His father, who lives in Ibadan, will help him. (non-defining).
- 

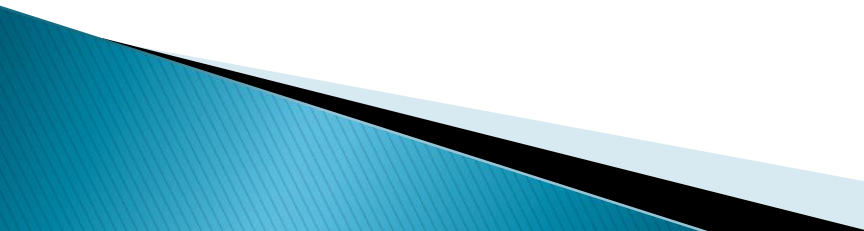
- ▶ 4. separate the subordinate clause from the main clause, especially if the subordinate clause comes first in the sentence, e.g.,
 - ▶ a) If you need my assistance,
(subordinate clause) please call me.
(main clause)
- 

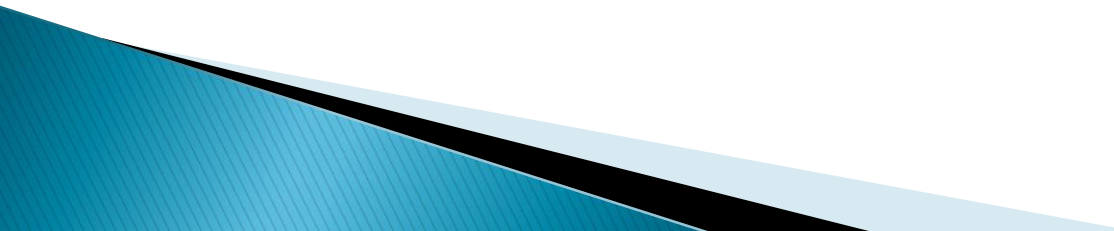
- ▶ b) After waiting for Joe for an hour, I decided to go back home.
 - ▶ 5. mark off an adverb or adverbial that occurs within the sentence instead of at the beginning or end of the sentence, e.g.,
 - ▶ They insisted, unfortunately, on embarking on the journey.
- 

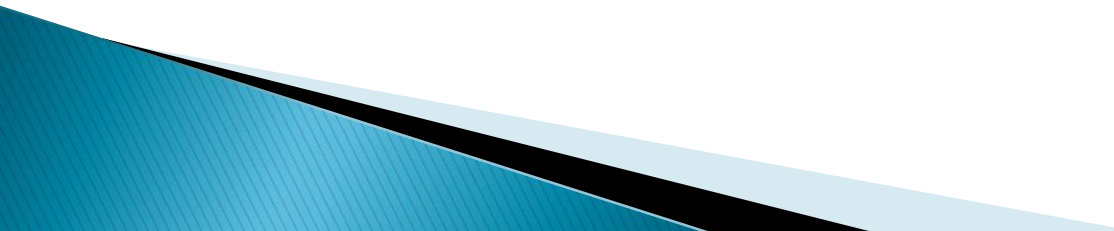
- ▶ Note:
 - ▶ i) The comma may be optional in some cases, but there are cases where it is obligatory, e.g.,
 - ▶ [a] What his name is, is not my business.
 - ▶ [b] Whatever he does, does not concern me.
- 

- ▶ ii) The comma can, if used wrongly, change the meaning of a sentence drastically, e.g.,
 - ▶ [a] He smiled at Lola and Alice, seeing this, got angry..
 - ▶ [b] He smiled at Lola, and Alice, seeing this, got angry.
- 

- ▶ Compare:
 - ▶ [a] He came, here yesterday.
 - ▶ [b] You can, eat it.
 - ▶ [c] She returned after, two weeks.
- 

- ▶ The Semi-colon [;]
 - ▶ a) Used to join two main clauses or sentences, e.g.,
 - ▶ i) The speech was badly delivered; it sent many people in the audience to sleep.
 - ▶ ii) John wanted to buy a car; his wife insisted on buying new curtains.
- 

- ▶ b) Also used to show sub-groupings in lists, e.g., The main items are: butter, cheese, eggs; oats, barley and wheat.
 - ▶ Note:
 - ▶ In many cases, the full stop can be used instead of the semi-colon.
- 

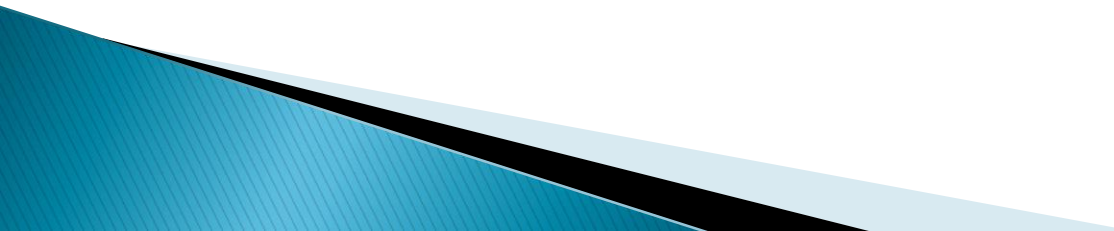
- ▶ The colon [:]
 - ▶ a) Used to introduce a list, give an example or give further information, e.g.,
 - ▶ [i]) The preacher talked about the following: honesty, Godliness, love, faithfulness and sacrifice.
 - ▶ [ii] I want to tell you this: Mary is in hospital.
- 

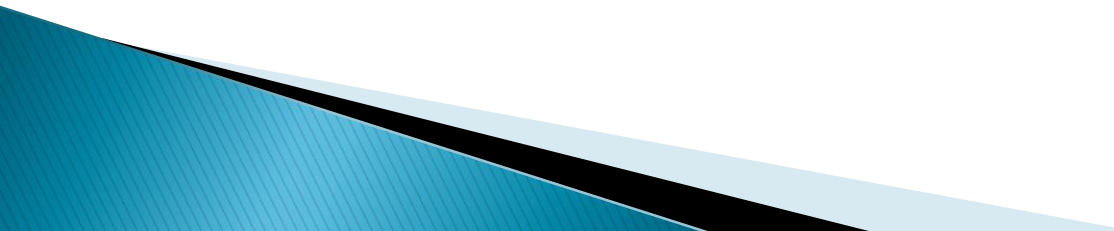
- ▶ b) to indicate page reference in an academic paper, e.g., (Johns, 2012:4).
- ▶ The hyphen [-]
- ▶ Used:
 - ▶ a) after a limited number of prefixes, e.g., *ex-*, *anti-* and *co-*, e.g., *ex-wife*, *ex-chairman*, *ex-minister*, *anti-aircraft gun*, *anti-colonialco-ordinate*, *co-opt*.

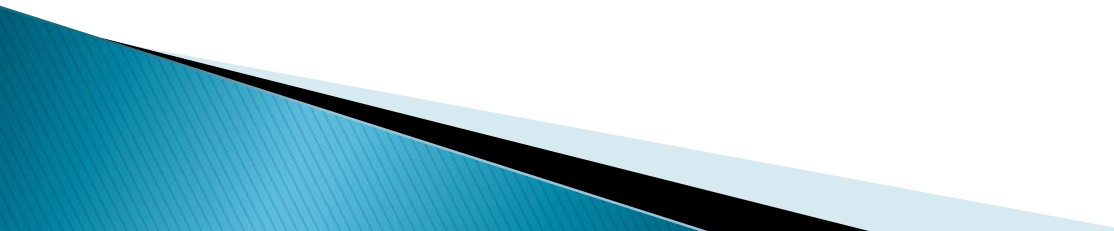
- ▶ b) to split a long word at the end of a line, but this should be done properly, e.g., *think-ing*, not *thin-king*; *imp-ossible*, not *impo-ssible*.
- ▶ c) to join some compound words, e.g., *self-pity*, *forty-two*.

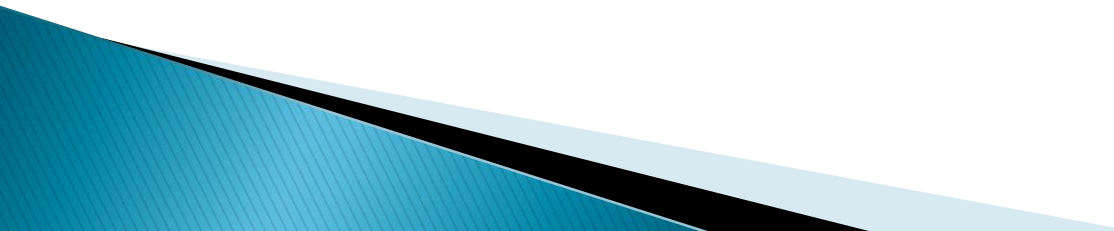
- ▶ Note:
- ▶ Verbs containing particles are not hyphenated, but they are when they are used as nouns, e.g., *to take over*, *to own up*, *to take in*; but *a hold-up*, *a reak-in*, *a sit-in*

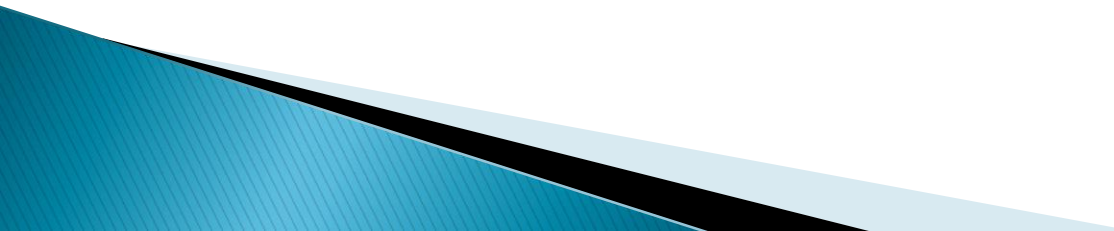
- ▶ The apostrophe
- ▶ Used to:
 - ▶ a) show omission of some letters in a word, e.g., *don't=do not, he'll=he will, it's=it is/was.*
 - ▶ b) show possession, e.g.,
▶ [i]*its*. Compare *it's*.

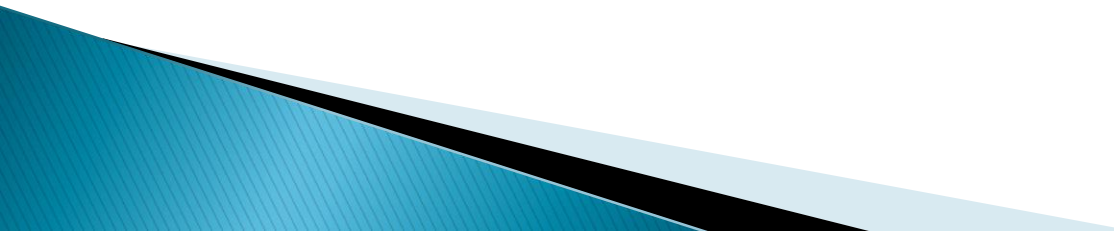
- ▶ [ii] *The man's houses, the students' hostel.*
 - ▶ [iii] *Saint Nicholas\ Hospital or Sint Nicholas's Hospital.*
 - ▶ The question mark[?]
- 

- ▶ Brackets or parenthesis
 - ▶ Used to:
 - ▶ a) clarify issues or to avoid confusion, e.g.,
 - ▶ He (Chief Ojo) told her (Abigail) that he (Chief Ojo) was going to Europe on vacation.
- 

- ▶ b) indicate references in an academic paper, e.g., *According to Williams (2014), ...*
 - ▶ c) Square brackets are used to to indicate new words that are added to a quotation so as to make the meaning clear, e.g.,
 - ▶ The minister [of Agriculture] spoke enthusiastically about the project.
- 

- ▶ Quotation marks or inverted commas [‘ ‘] or [“ “], e.g.,
 - ▶ a)” The items were bought from a supermarket.”
 - ▶ b) According to her, the child was found in the room “fast asleep”.
 - ▶ The exclamation mark
- 

- ▶ The dash
 - ▶ It can be used in the place of the comma or brackets, but it belongs to informal uses of language.
 - ▶ The full stop
 - ▶ Used to mark the end of a sentence, e.g.,
 - ▶ He was very tired. But he needed to go out again.
- 

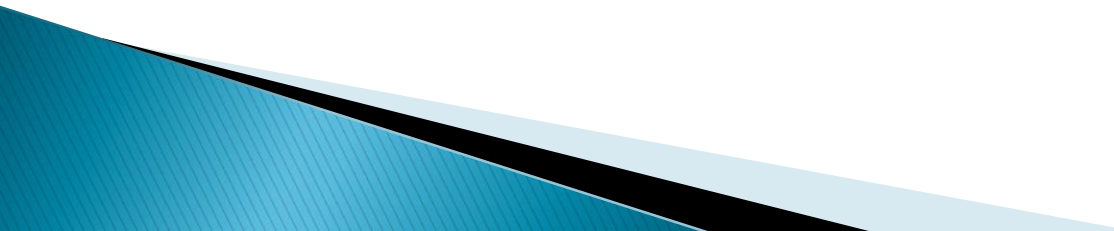
- ▶ Note:
 - ▶ a) A new sentence begins with a capital letter.
 - ▶ b) Capital letters are also used at the beginning of names of people, places, nations, days, months, festivals and historical eras, titles of books, magazines, plays, works of art, adjectives of nationality,, and for many abbreviations (see Jordan, 1980:80-81).
- 

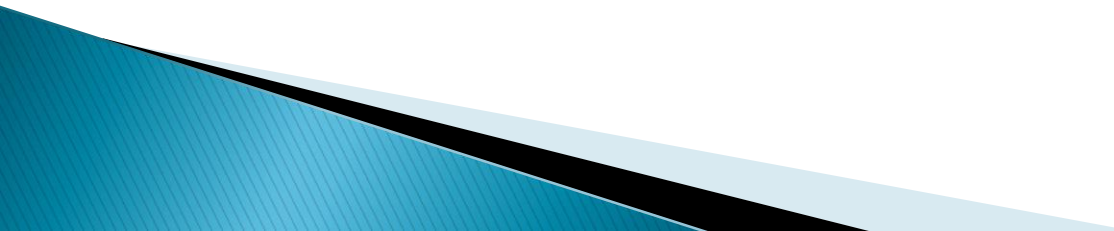
▶ Paragraph Development

A thesis statement that contains the main idea and developed by means of definition, exemplification, repetition and comparison and contrast.

So, avoid writing one-sentence paragraphs.

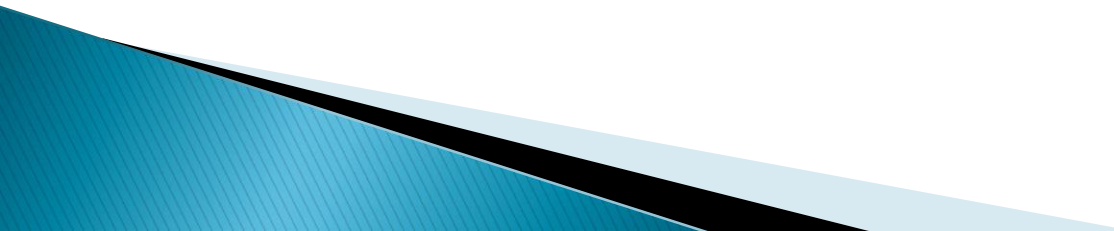


- ▶ Style and Appropriateness
 - ▶ Distinction between formality and informality.
 - ▶ a) Formal language, used in formal situations, which tend to be serious, e.g., in the office, or when writing to a company or an organization.
 - ▶ Does not allow abbreviated forms, e.g., *don't*,
- 

- ▶ *won't*.
 - ▶ Does not allow the use of slang expressions, vernacular or pidgin.
 - ▶ b) Informal language: used in more relaxed situations, such as writing to a friend.
 - ▶ Allows the use of slang expressions, etc.
- 

▶ Concluding Remarks

- ▶ I have tried in this presentation to discuss some basic guidelines in writing. Writing is a very wide area of study, and I cannot exhaust the subject. For instance , I have not discussed varieties of writing, such as reports, minutes of meetings, etc.

- ▶ One final note
 - ▶ To be a good writer, one must keep writing. Since writing is a skill, it should be used constantly. Otherwise, it would not be as good as it should be.
- 

▶ **THANK YOU FOR LISTENING**

▶ **AND**

▶ **GOD BLESS YOU**